

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) Device for laying rigid tubular pipes from a working platform of a laying vessel, the said pipes, ~~which are designed to convey a fluid within,~~ being laid by successively connecting, at the said working platform, pipe sections which are oriented in a direction between an inclined direction and a vertical direction, the said device comprising:

a lower retaining device operable means ~~designed~~ to retain a pipe, and a lower securing device operable means ~~designed~~ to support the said lower retaining device means at the said platform,

an upper retaining device operable means ~~being designed~~ to retain the said pipe and operable being able to move translationally ~~with respect to~~ toward or away from the said lower retaining device, ~~the upper and lower means, characterized in that the said retaining devices each including elements operable means (24, 36) are designed to retain the said pipe sections (18) from the inside the pipe sections, and in that the said device additionally comprises~~

an upper securing ~~means (22) device~~ to which the said lower retaining device means (24) can be coupled through a pipe section (16) to be connected, in such a way as to release the said lower securing ~~means (20) device~~ and to be able to secure thereto the said upper retaining device means (36) after the said pipe section (16) to be connected has been connected and submerged.

2. (Currently Amended) Laying device according to Claim 1, wherein the ~~characterized in that the said retaining devices each means (24, 36) include a locking sleeve (26) prolonged by a cleat (30), the said locking sleeve (26) being designed operable to be activated so as to expand inside the pipeline in order to be locked therein to retain a respective pipe section in which the locking sleeve is disposed.~~

3. (Currently Amended) Laying device according to Claim 2, wherein characterized in that the ~~said lower retaining device is means (24)~~ are provided with a centring centering sleeve (40) mounted between the ~~said locking sleeve (26)~~ and the ~~said cleat (30)~~, the ~~said centring centering sleeve (40)~~ being operable designed to extend between the ~~said pipe (18)~~ and a pipe section (16) to be connected.

4. (Currently Amended) Laying device according to claim 1, further comprising a sling device coupling either one of Claims 1 and 3, characterized in that the ~~said lower retaining device means (24)~~ are coupled to the ~~said upper securing device means (22)~~ by ~~first means (34)~~ forming a sling.

5. (Currently Amended) Laying device according to Claim 4, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the ~~said upper retaining means (36)~~ are device is operable designed to be traversed freely by the ~~said first sling-forming means (34)~~ sling device.

6. (Currently Amended) Laying device according to ~~Claim 4 or 5,~~ characterized in that the ~~said claim 5,~~ wherein the upper securing device comprises a means (22) comprise first means for translationally translational device operable for driving the said first sling-forming means (34) sling device.

7. (Currently Amended) Laying device according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 6,~~ characterized in that the ~~said claim 1, further comprising a second sling device and the upper retaining device is means (36)~~ are mounted on the second means (38) forming a sling, the said second sling-forming means (38) being driven device, a second drive driving the second sling device translationally, the by second drive being means mounted on the said upper securing device means (22).

8.-9. (Canceled)

10. (New) A method for laying tubular pipe, comprising:

retaining an upper end of a first pipe section at a lower securing device located at a working platform, by attaching a lower retaining device at a location toward the pipe upper end of the first pipe and by attaching the lower retaining device to the lower securing device at the platform;

positioning a lower end of a second pipe section over the upper end of the first pipe section;

detaching the lower retaining device from the lower securing device and attaching the lower retaining device to an upper retaining device toward an upper end of the second pipe section;

attaching the lower end of the second pipe section to the upper end of the first pipe section;

lowering the first and second pipe sections, while the lower retaining device is attached to the first pipe section, until the upper retaining device is at the lower securing device, and engaging the lower securing device and the upper retaining device;

releasing the lower retaining device from the first pipe section and raising and then attaching the lower retaining device toward the lower end of the second pipe section; and

releasing the upper retaining device from the lower securing device.

11. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the lower retaining device is attached toward the upper end of the first pipe section and on an interior of the first pipe section.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the positioning of the second pipe section over the first pipe section includes attaching the upper retaining device toward an upper end of the second pipe section.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the upper retaining device is attached toward the upper end of the second pipe section and on an interior of the second pipe section.

14. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the lower retaining device comprises a sling which is disposed inside the pipe sections and is passed through the second pipe section to the upper retaining device.

15. (New) A method for laying tubular pipe, comprising:

retaining an upper end of a first pipe section at a lower securing device which is located at a working platform by attaching a lower retaining device at a location toward the upper end of the first pipe section and by attaching the lower retaining device to the lower securing device at the platform;

positioning a lower end of a second pipe section over the upper end of the first pipe section by a lower sling, and fastening the lower sling to an upper securing device above the second pipe section, wherein the lower sling supports the lower retaining device and supports the weight of the first pipe section;

installing an upper retaining device toward the upper end of the second pipe section;

connecting an upper sling to the upper retaining device and to an upper securing device for supporting the weight of the first pipe section by the lower sling;

removing the lower securing device from the first pipe section;

lowering the second pipe section to the first pipe section and then attaching the lower end of the second pipe section to the upper end of the first pipe section;

with the lower sling retaining the lower retaining device, lowering the second pipe section which is together with the first pipe section, and thereby lowering the lower retaining device and thereby also lowering the upper retaining device toward the lower securing device;

engaging the upper retaining device in the lower securing device so as to transfer the load of the first pipe section from the upper retaining device to the lower securing device;

disconnecting the lower securing device from the lower retaining device enabling the lower sling to be raised up to the vicinity of the working platform at the upper end of the first pipe section;

activating the lower retaining device to lock it to the first pipe section making a transfer of the load of the first pipe section to the upper securing device via the lower sling;

releasing the upper retaining device from the lower securing device and from the first pipe section so that the upper retaining device can be connected on another pipe section.

16. (New) The method of claim 15, wherein the upper sling and the retaining device engage the respective pipe section on the interior of the pipe thereof and the retaining means and slings move through the pipe sections between the positions thereof.